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**Environment Department Issues a "BOIL WATER ORDER" for  
La Association de Agua de Los Brazos**

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau has advised the La Association de Agua de Los Brazos to issue a "boil water order" for its consumers.

The La Association de Agua de Los Brazos serves approximately 50 consumers in Rio Arriba County, located approximately 15 miles southeast of the village of Chama, New Mexico on State Road 512. The water system was put on a "boil water advisory" on late Wednesday afternoon, September 22, 2004, due to bacteriological contamination that exceeded the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for *E.coli*. NMED requires that the system owner and operator notify all customers served by that system of this finding. **This boil water advisory does not affect the adjacent Los Brazos Co-op water system.**

Consumers of the La Association de Agua de Los Brazos water system are advised to boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking, and dishwashing.

The presence of *E. coli* in water indicates that the water may have been in contact with sewage or animal wastes, and could contain disease-causing organisms. Most strains of *E. coli* are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals. However, a positive test for *E. coli* in the drinking water supply may indicate the presence of dangerous strains of *E. coli* or other disease-causing organisms, which are sometimes found in sewage or animal wastes. These types of organisms may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and, in rare cases, even death. Children, the elderly, and immuno-compromised individuals are at an increased risk for illness.

Actions have been initiated to disinfect the water system and identify the possible source(s) of contamination. In addition, the Drinking Water Bureau will continue to assist with troubleshooting to identify the source of the problem.

The New Mexico Department of Health has also been notified and will remain on alert for any health effects linked to this water quality issue. Consumers of the water system may call (505) 827-0006 or (505) 476-3028, if they have any water-related health concerns.

For more information contact Kenneth Richard, Geoscientist, NMED, at (505) 827-1400 x.1009 or Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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